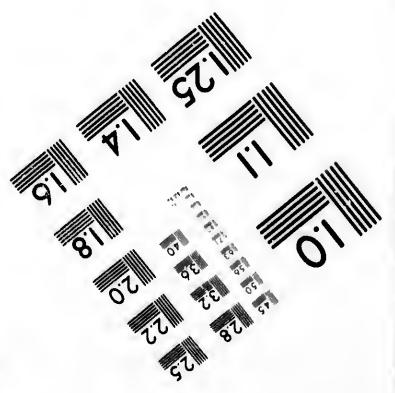
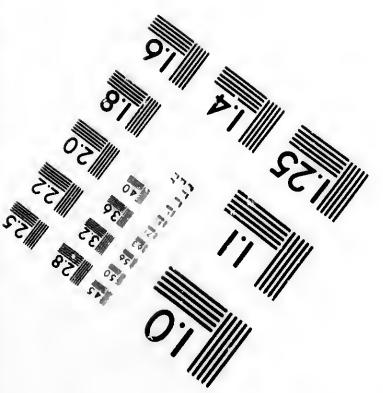
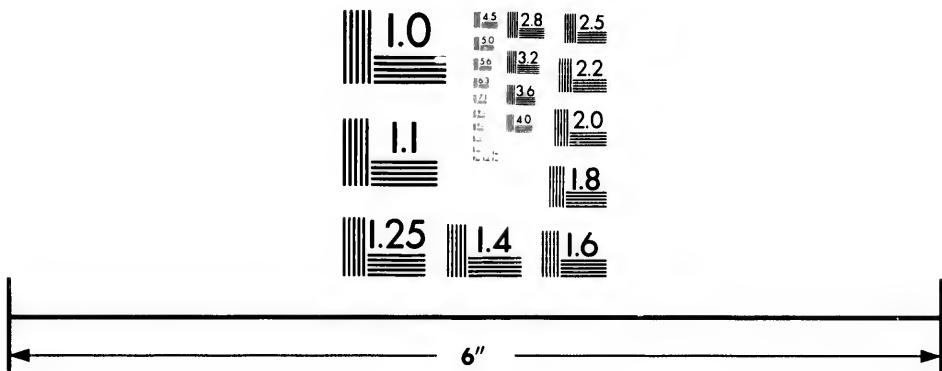


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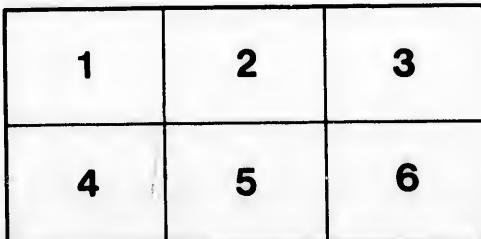
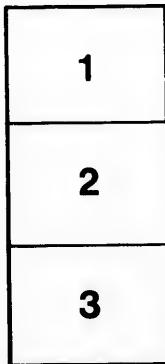
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## LETTERS

—FROM THE—

REVEREND MR. ROUSSELOT  
PTRE, S. S.

PRESIDENT OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS  
OF THE

CITY OF MONTREAL,

IN ANSWER TO THE

ATTACKS MADE BY THE EVENING POST.

WILLIAM H. DODGE  
BOSTON, MASS.

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To the Editor

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*To the Editor of the EVENING POST:*

SIR,—I am instructed by the Board of Roman Catholic School Commissioners of this city, to request the publication in your paper of the following resolution, passed unanimously at their first meeting, after the publication in your columns of certain strictures upon its administration.

A. D. DECELLES,  
Sec. C. S. C.

Montreal, December 10, 1879.

At a meeting of the Roman Catholic School Commissioners, held on the 9th day of December instant, Reverend V. Rousselot, President of the Commission, in the chair, the following resolution was placed before the Board and unanimously carried:—

“ Inasmuch as certain unfounded accusations have been brought against the administration of the Board of Roman Catholic School Commissioners, by individuals whose motives the Commission is not now called upon to appreciate;

“ Inasmuch as these accusations were embodied under twelve different heads in a petition presented by certain citizens to the City Council a year or so ago;

“ Inasmuch as upon the presentation of this petition the Board of Roman Catholic School Commissioners, through the medium of the press, expressed to the public generally its willingness to court an enquiry from the only authority to which it is responsible, viz. the Department of Public Instruction;

“ Inasmuch as such offer has never been acted upon by the petitioners to the City Council; and

“ Inasmuch as similar charges have recently been reiterated in one of the evening newspapers of this city;” be it

*Resolved*—“ That this Board having ever been willing and desirous that those interested in the upright and judicious administration of its trust should have every opportunity given them to formulate any charges of mismanagement alleged against this commission, publicity be once more given of its willingness and desire that an *enquête* into its administration be demanded by those who, for motives of public or private interest, are prepared to substantiate their accusations.”

*To the Editor of the EVENING POST.*

I notice with regret that in your edition of yesterday you persist in your accusations against the gentlemen of the Roman Catholic School Commission of this city, supplemented by an assertion that, as matters stand at present, the “onus” is upon us to establish the good administration of the Commission.

This pretension is subversive of the most elementary principles of justice which, presume every man innocent until proved guilty. You

publish against myself, as against the other members of the Commission, charges of the most serious nature, of which I feel guiltless, and you request an *enquête*.

I cheerfully accept your proposal. Let responsible men clearly formulate their charges before the Government, and demand an investigation. I assure you that I court it as much as you do.

Before closing, allow me to say, that I sincerely regret that before attacking us publicly as you have done, you did not obtain from us exact information; we would have given it, and you would have thus avoided serious error, as you may judge yourself by referring to the answer appended to this letter, and you would not have written articles, as a Catholic and a man of honor, you must now regret.

V. ROUSSELOT, PTE.,  
President, Catholic School Commissioners.

December 12, 1879.

#### 1. Editorial of November 12th, 1879.

"The Provincial Government appoints seven Commissioners, and the City Council appoints two, so that not one of them is appointed by the people who pay the taxes."

The Commission numbers only six members—two clergymen and four laymen. Three only are named by the Local Government, and the three others are elected by the people's representatives in the City Council.

#### 2. Editorial under same date :

"As regards the former, '(the Commercial Academy on St. Catherine street) we cannot precisely state, but may put it down at the princely sum of half a million of dollars'

The nine large school buildings erected by the Commissioners, cost in all \$318,000. The cost of the Plateau Academy, included in this sum, amounts to \$84,279, comprising the principal's residence.

#### 3. Editorial November 19th, 1879 :

"Then again, after a diligent search, we can only obtain three annual reports furnished by the Commissioners, during their reign of ten years, to the City Council."

According to law, the annual reports since 1871, have been regularly published yearly, in French and English newspapers in this city. This report of all the receipts and expenses of the Commission has been regularly sent every twelvemonth to the Minister of Public Instruction, to be published in the *Journal of Education*. Although not obligatory, copies of these reports have been transmitted to the City Council.

#### 4. Editorial, November 22nd, 1879 :—

"A school in Roy street, at an enormous expense—a school entirely unnecessary, and which is now mostly attended by the children of St. Jean Baptiste Village."

There are in Roy street school, as shown by the last returns, 315 pupils, only 13 of which number are residents beyond the city limits, and the latter pay double fees.

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5. Editorial, November 29th, 1879 :  
 • • "The Catholic School Commissioners could not get along with  
 the million of money or so they have received up to this, not to mention  
 the three or four hundred thousand dollars annually paid by the  
 pupils in fees."

The total amount of fees paid for the last fiscal year by all the  
 pupils in every school or academy under the Commission was \$15,737.36,  
 and included in this sum are \$7,408.61 paid by students who attend the  
 schools, which, though under the control of the Commission and  
 subsidized by it, collect their own fees for their maintenance. The  
 Commission, therefore, only receive \$8,328.75.

6. Editorial, November 29th, 1879.

"But, nevertheless, the children had to pay large fees, and it is a  
 well known fact that those who could not afford to pay them were  
 excluded from the schools."

Suffice it to say that of 7,113 scholars frequenting (as shown by last  
 year's report) all the schools under the control of the Commission,  
 2,263 or 32 per cent., were admitted free of charge, and received their  
 education gratuitously. The average annual fee per head upon the  
 number who pay fees at all, viz., 4,850 scholars, is only \$3 22 per annum.

7. Editorial, December 9th, 1879 :

"What has happened the three or four hundred thousand dollars  
 discrepancy between the receipts and expenditures as shown by their  
 meagre returns."

A gratuitous and false assertion. The accounts have been regularly  
 audited and balanced every year. No discrepancy whatever between the  
 receipts and expenditures exists or is shown by the returns.

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The *Evening Post* having refused to publish the following letter, it  
 was inserted in the Montreal *Gazette* and *Evening Star*.

Montreal, 30th December, 1879.

To the Editor EVENING POST :

Sir,—I had trusted in sending you my letter of the 12th instant,  
 that you would either have accepted my explanations or taken immedi-  
 ately the step you had yourself suggested of demanding an investiga-  
 tion by Government. I informed you of our desire equal to your own,  
 that it should be granted, and expressed even our happiness at your  
 obtaining it, and yet you have taken no measures in that direction, but  
 continue to launch against us accusations that I cannot but characterize  
 as unworthy. In your editorial of the 15th inst., in the adjoining  
 column to the one containing my letter in the same issue, you have cast  
 a slur upon my position of President of the Board of Catholic School  
 Commissioners of this city, by confirming what you had already stated  
 in allusion to me in your article of the 12th.

"It is not improbable the reverend gentleman was placed in that  
 position in order that an air of respectability might be thrown over the  
 proceedings, for it is almost unnecessary to say that he knows very little

Further about the operation of the active members of the Commission—wl. "That may be termed the inner circle."

Now, sir, this assertion on your part is in itself a personal accusation offered to against myself as serious as it is gratuitous, and furthermore inculpates the other gentlemen of the Commission. It amounts simply to charge me with having accepted and occupied as a sinecure a position of public trust and responsibility, with having neglected my duty and closed my eyes to the administration of a board over whose important deliberations I have the honor to preside. It charges also the gentlemen composing the Commission with having deceived and blinded me in their operations. If you shrink from an enquête that would disclose the truth, at least I challenge you to prove these accusations.

I find also in your editorial of the 15th instant:

"The Government Blue Books for 1876 and 1877 show for monthly fees, \$334,880, and for the following year nearly \$400,000."

You must know that the statements in the returns you refer to, and the figures they contain, represent the monthly revenue derived during the year from all the Catholic schools in the city of Montreal, comprising the fees received from all those Catholic institutions, such as the Dr. Nelson College, the St. Mary's College, the Oblats and Friars' Schools, the various convents and academies of the Sisters of the Congregation, Sacred Heart, Bon Pasteur, St. Laurent, &c., and yet you would render us responsible for all this revenue! How can the Commissioners be called upon to answer or to be accountable for fees received by institutions over which they exercise no control whatever? You impose upon the good faith of your readers.

Further on in the same editorial you continue: "Granted that the school alone cost \$84,000, what about the 200,000 feet of land surrounding it, the filling of it up, the marble posts, the grand St. Catherine street entrance and other expensive *et ceteras*, which must be taken into account as well as the building pure and simple?"

You at first pretended that the Plateau Academy building had cost \$500,000. It is pleasing to see you rectify your error: \$416,000 is certainly not a trifling discrepancy.

As to the land, the Commissioners acquired it at an average of 38 cents a foot, but this, I am informed by the accountant and those who have familiarized themselves with details, includes grading, and tracing of avenues, filling, planting of trees and other improvements. This land is far more valuable to-day. A portion of this property which was not considered necessary by the Board was disposed of five or six years after its purchase at the rate of \$1 a foot. The speculation, as I view it, was not such an unfortunate one. You will, moreover, learn with satisfaction that all the material out of which are erected the marble posts at the St. Catherine street entrance of the Academy was the generous gift of an ex-alderman of this city. The lamps and other "expensive etceteras" were donations from practical friends of Catholic institutions.

Further on you say :—

mission—wl. "That the Commissioners have rejected the tenders of men who offered to do the work required at a cheaper rate than those accepted, and would have done it after a better fashion." I fail to understand more inculpate tenders you refer to. As a matter of fact, whenever an important work to be undertaken was to be commenced, coal purchased, &c., tenders were issued of published for in the usual way—and at our board meetings, it is to our knowledge that we invariably give the contract to the lowest and closed deliberative tenderer. As regards the St. Bridget's Christian Brothers' school, you find means to base a charge that you can certainly not in their opportunity or justify. This school does not belong to the Commission, it is the truth, parish property, over which we can exercise absolutely no control whatever. We have no power or authority to effect any change in the construction of the building.

for monthly. The Commissioners give the Brothers who teach there an annual subsidy of \$2,000. In what then does our guilt consist?

you refer to, and In one of your columns you, moreover, assert that the primary school on the Plateau was built by the Commissioners, and for obvious reasons, *by day labor*. But, my dear sir, if my memory serves me right as the MonDr. Nelson erected this building as a dwelling house for himself and his' Schools, the family. The Commissioners only purchased it years after its construction.

Congregation. I might continue my quotations from your columns, refuting as would render easily all your accusations, but let me ask you before I close, what legitimate motive have you, a Catholic and editor of the only Catholic daily published in this city in the English tongue, in waging this war against us? For my part I can conceive none.

anted that the If you are really acting in good faith, I urge it once more, request and surround an *enquête*. If we are found guilty, you will then be right in publicly St. Catherine denouncing us, and in attacking us as we should deserve. But if indeed be taken into we are not guilty of all these charges you shower upon us, why resort to such means to fanaticise the public mind? Is this conduct worthy of a Catholic Irishman?

Believe me, sir, it is with regret that I see myself forced to address you this lengthy letter, but I felt it to be my duty both as priest, and as the Cure of Notre Dame. This, however, cannot alter my lasting affection for my Irish brethren and friends, and my desire to be of every service to them in my power.

Your humble servant,

V. ROUSSELOT, PTHE.,  
President of the Catholic School Commission.

Montreal, January 2nd, 1880.

*Editor EVENING POST:*

I see by your issue of to-day that you decline to publish, not as you assert, "a Statement of the Commissioners," but my open letter sent you

on the 30th ult. This refusal, I regret to say, is in keeping with the course you have followed in your attacks upon the Commissioners. As a journalist, and I may go further, as a Catholic, you were bound by equity and by your own conscience to give to my refutation the same publicity that had characterized your charges against the board. You have deemed it *expedient* to act otherwise, and I have now no other course left me but to appeal to the columns of another journal in order that your readers may be disabused as regards our respective positions.

The bearer is instructed to request the return of my manuscript.

V. ROUSSELOT, PTE.

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